WHICH IS WHY
HE TRULY HOPES
"SUSPECT S"... ISN'T
YOUR FATHER.

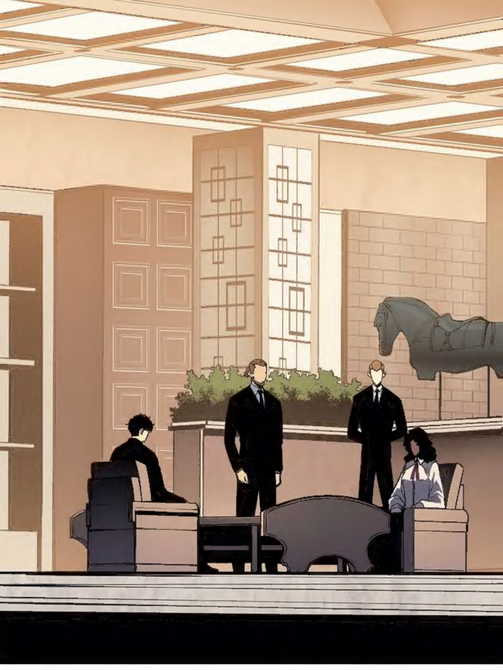
Solo Leveling

Art · DUBU(REDICE STUDIO)
Original Novel · Chugong
Story · h-goon

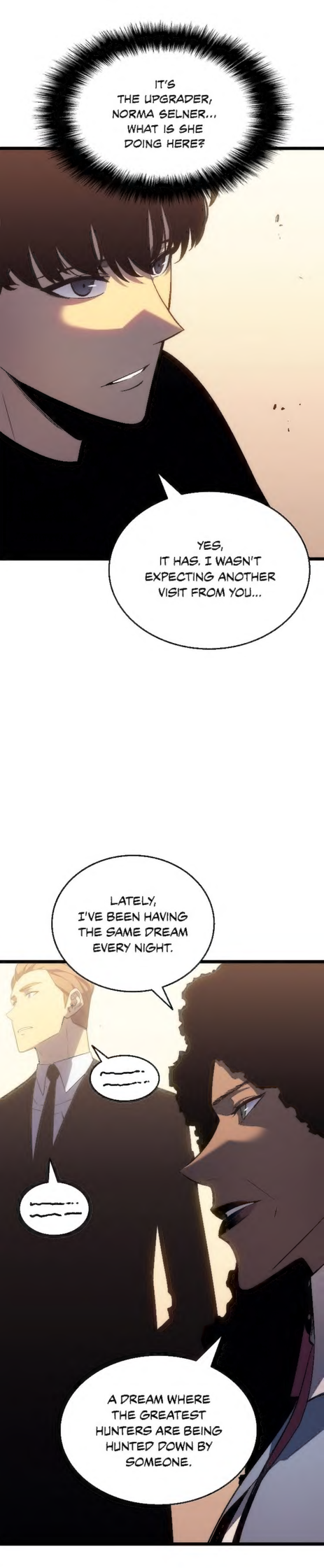
149

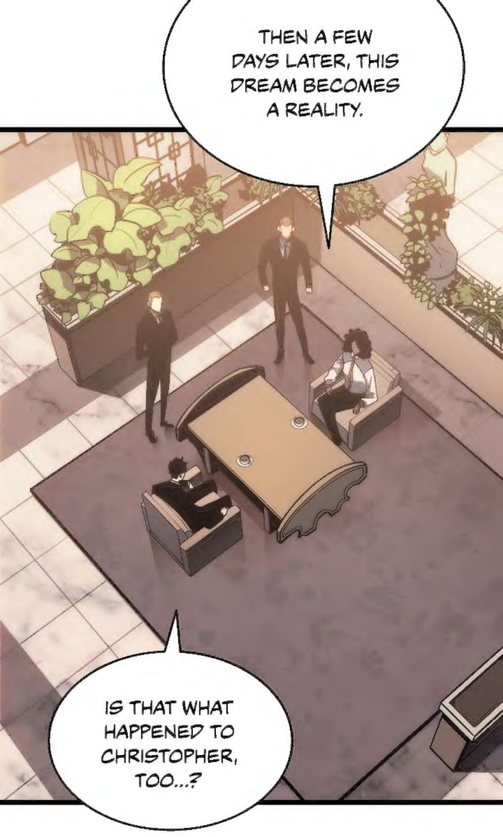
MR. SUNG.

COULD YOU SPARE US A FEW MINUTES?



IT'S
BEEN A WHILE,
MR. SUNG.

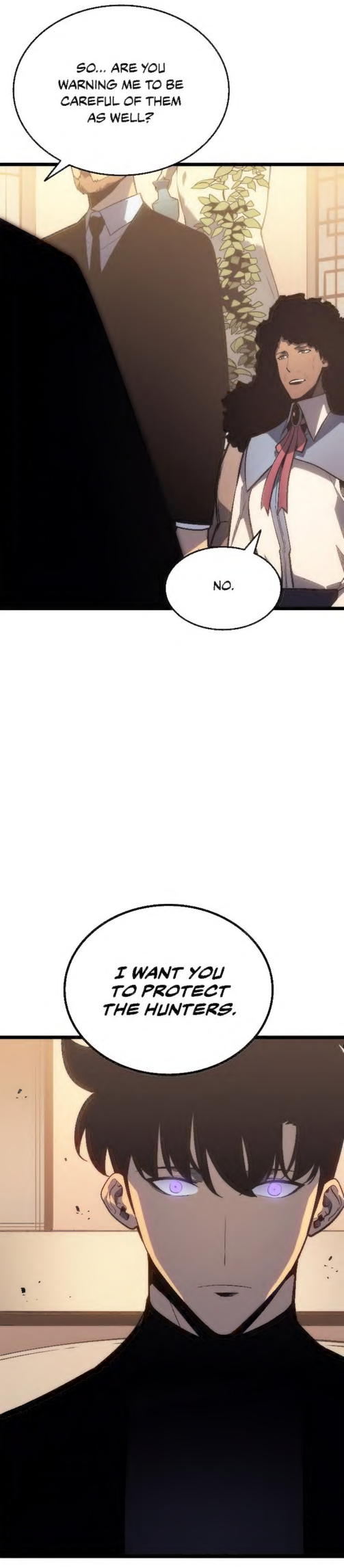

IT'S THE UPGRADER, NORMA SELNER... WHAT IS SHE DOING HERE?
YES, IT HAS. I WASN'T EXPECTING ANOTHER VISIT FROM YOU...
LATELY, I'VE BEEN HAVING THE SAME DREAM EVERY NIGHT.
A DREAM WHERE THE GREATEST HUNTERS ARE BEING HUNTED DOWN BY SOMEONE.


THEN A FEW DAYS LATER, THIS DREAM BECOMES A REALITY.
IS THAT WHAT HAPPENED TO CHRISTOPHER, TOO...?

WE WARNED CHRISTOPHER, BUT... HE DIDN'T LISTEN TO US.

AND AS A RESULT... WELL, I'M SURE YOU'RE ALREADY WELL AWARE.

POWERFUL HUNTERS WHO HAVE BEEN PROTECTING OUR WORLD WILL CONTINUE TO DIE.
THE BEINGS THAT ARE HUNTING THEM DOWN WILL STOP AT NOTHING.

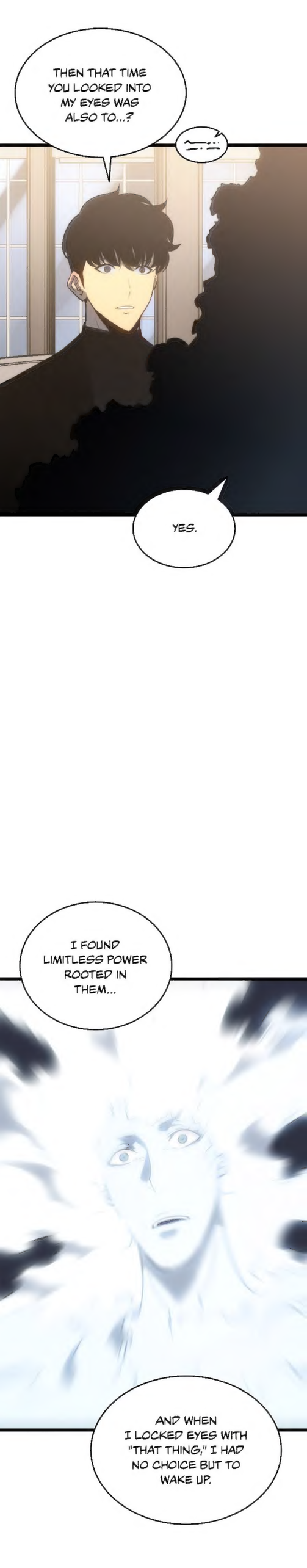

SO... ARE YOU WARNING ME TO BE CAREFUL OF THEM AS WELL?
NO.
I WANT YOU TO PROTECT THE HUNTERS.

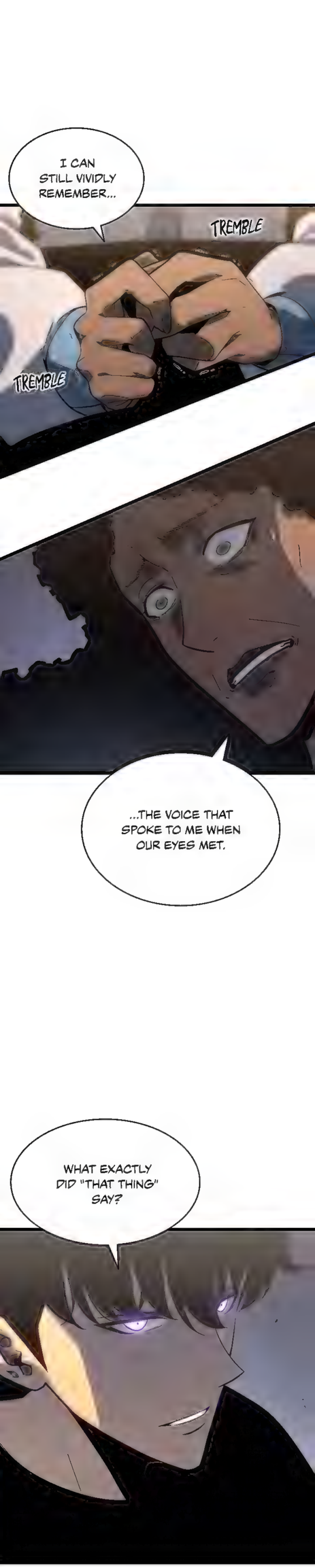
I TRIED MY BEST TO REMEMBER THE ASSAILANTS' FACES IN MY RECURRING DREAM...

...BUT I WAS UNSUCCESSFUL.

SO I DECIDED TO TRY A DIFFERENT METHOD.

I DECIDED TO USE MY ABILITY TO SEE WHO THEY REALLY WERE FROM WITHIN MY DREAM.


THEN THAT TIME YOU LOOKED INTO MY EYES WAS ALSO TO...?
YES.
I FOUND LIMITLESS POWER ROOTED IN THEM...
AND WHEN I LOCKED EYES WITH "THAT THING," I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO WAKE UP.


I CAN STILL VIVIDLY REMEMBER...
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
...THE VOICE THAT SPOKE TO ME WHEN OUR EYES MET.
WHAT EXACTLY DID "THAT THING" SAY?

TO GO BACK...
...AND PATIENTLY WAIT FOR THE WAR.

IT'S WHAT THE KING OF THE GIANTS TOLD ME ABOUT...
THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE RULERS AND THE MONARCHS.

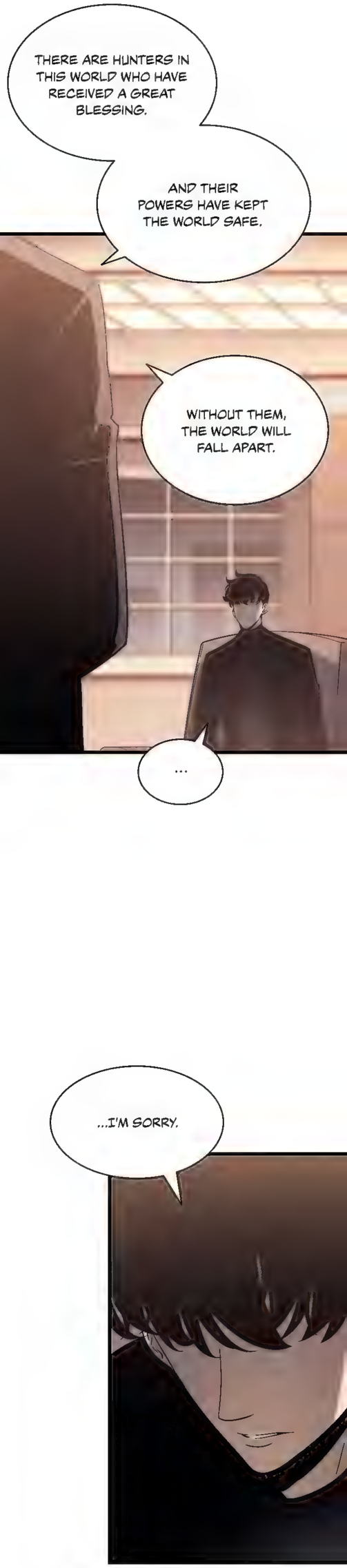
THEN...
THE GUYS WHO ARE AFTER THE HUNTERS... WHOSE SIDE ARE THEY ON?
BUT WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH YOUR REQUEST?

...I SAW THE SAME POWER WITHIN YOU, MR. SUNG.

DID SHE SEE THE SHADOW MONARCH'S POWER INSIDE OF ME THAT DAY?
IF THE ASSAILANTS IN HER DREAM HAD THE SAME POWER, THEN...
...THEY MUST BE MONARCHS.

THESE BEINGS FAR SURPASS THE CAPABILITIES OF HUNTERS.
SO IN ORDER TO STOP THEM, WE NEED A HUNTER LIKE YOU, SOMEONE WHO CAN STAND ON EQUAL FOOTING WITH THEM.
TO BE HONEST, WE WERE SKEPTICAL WHEN WE WERE TOLD THAT YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE OUT THERE WHO COULD PROTECT THE OTHER HUNTERS, BUT...
...AFTER SEEING YOUR FIGHT WITH MR. ANDRE YESTERDAY, WE CHANGED OUR MINDS.

OF COURSE, WE DON'T EXPECT YOU TO HELP US FOR FREE.
WE ARE WILLING TO GIVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT... EVEN THE RUNE STONE, THE MOST VALUABLE TREASURE THAT KAMISH LEFT BEHIND.


THERE ARE HUNTERS IN THIS WORLD WHO HAVE RECEIVED A GREAT BLESSING.
AND THEIR POWERS HAVE KEPT THE WORLD SAFE.
WITHOUT THEM, THE WORLD WILL FALL APART.
...
...I'M SORRY.

IS IT BECAUSE YOU STILL HOLD A GRUDGE AGAINST MR. ANDRE...?
NO, THAT'S NOT IT.

IT'S BECAUSE I DON'T YET KNOW WHO I SHOULD BE FIGHTING AGAINST.

WELL, THEN.
RISE

I'M GOING TO PROTECT MY FAMILY, EVEN IF IT MEANS TURNING ALL THE HUNTERS IN THE WORLD AGAINST ME.

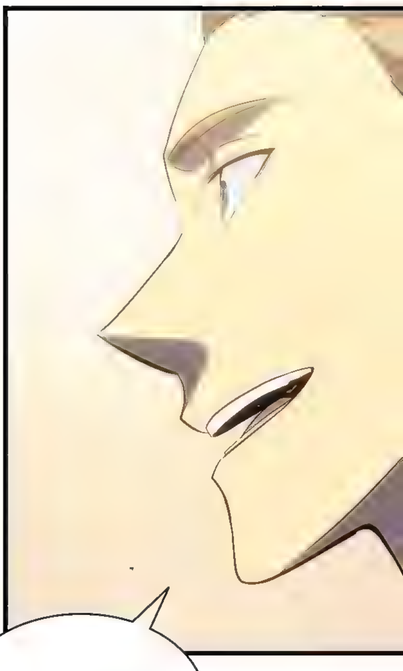
HALT

SIGH

MR. WHITE.

COULD YOU GIVE ME THE LIST OF HUNTERS THEY WANT ME TO PROTECT?

I'D ALSO APPRECIATE IT IF YOU COULD SET UP A MEETING WITH THE INDIVIDUALS ON THAT LIST.



OF COURSE!

AN EVENT HOSTED BY THE BUREAU OF HUNTERS ON THE LAST DAY OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD CONFERENCE...

THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTERS.

IT FEELS
BETTER THAN
EVER, SIR!

WHEN I HEARD YOU DUKED IT OUT WITH THOMAS ANDRE, THE MAN PEOPLE CALL "GOLIATH," IN ORDER TO PROTECT ME, I...

HEY, LOOK OVER THERE...
I SAW. HE'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF US, BUT I CAN'T FEEL HIS PRESENCE AT ALL.
HE'S ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL.

THEN THE HUNTER NEXT TO HIM MUST BE...?

SUNG JINWOO FOUGHT THOMAS ANDRE TO RESCUE THAT GUY?

IT'S AN HONOR TO MEET YOU, MR. SUNG.
I'M THE CEO OF A COMPANY THAT SPECIALIZES IN HANDLING THE DISPOSAL OF MAGIC BEAST REMAINS.
I'M INTERESTED IN PURCHASING THE GIANTS YOU DEFEATED.
MAY I HAVE A MOMENT OF YOUR TIME?

NICE TIMING.
I'M MOSTLY IN CHARGE OF RAIDS, WHILE MY VICE GUILD MASTER OVER HERE TAKES CARE OF THE BUSINESS SIDE OF THINGS.
I'M YOO JINHO, THE VICE GUILD MASTER OF AHJIN GUILD.
AH, HELLO. IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.
I DON'T USUALLY TALK BUSINESS AT EVENTS LIKE THIS, BUT...
...I'LL MAKE AN

FOR YOU.

MR. SUNG, HERE IS THE LIST YOU ASKED FOR.
EXTEND

THE BUREAU RANKS ALL HUNTERS WITH A POINT SYSTEM BASED ON THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS.
THE 10 HUNTERS LISTED HERE HAVE THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF POINTS.

IF YOU ACCEPT

ARE THE INDIVIDUALS YOU'LL BE ASKED TO PROTECT.

SO THESE PEOPLE ARE YOUR HIGHEST PRIORITY.

HUNTER POINTS, HUH...?

WHERE DO I RANK AMONG THESE HUNTERS?

IF YOUR VICTORY OVER THE GIANTS IS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION,

YOU'D PROBABLY BE IN THIRD OR FOURTH PLACE.

FIRST PLACE IS THOMAS ANDRE, SECOND PLACE IS LIU ZHIGANG, THIRD PLACE IS CHRISTOPHER REED, FOURTH PLACE IS SIDDHARTH BACHCHAN, AND FIFTH PLACE IS...

WHAT A PAIN. I'LL JUST ASSIGN A SHADOW TO ALL OF THEM INSTEAD OF MEMORIZING EACH AND EVERY NAME.

AND IT JUST SO HAPPENS, THIS IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO SEND OUT MY SHADOW SOLDIERS.

I'LL USE THE HUNTERS TO APPROACH THE MONARCHS...
FSHHH
THEN I'LL BE ABLE TO TELL WHO'S A FRIEND AND WHO'S A FOE...
...AND FIGURE OUT HOW TO FIGHT AGAINST THE OPPOSING SIDE.

STEP
STEP

MR. SUNG...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

SUNG JINWOO...

LET ME ASK YOU ONE THING.
I'M TOLD THAT THIS ARM... CAN'T BE TREATED BY THE HEALERS BECAUSE THE MANA DAMAGE IS TOO SEVERE.
MY DOCTOR ALSO SAID THE SAME THING. THAT EVEN THOUGH MY ARM IS HEALING SLOWLY, IT'S GONNA TAKE A WHILE FOR IT TO FULLY RECOVER.

YOU WERE MORE THAN CAPABLE OF NOT ONLY FINISHING ME OFF, BUT ALSO WIPING OUT THE MEMBERS OF MY GUILD.
BUT AMIDST ALL THAT CHAOS, NOT A SINGLE PERSON DIED.

THAT IS, ASIDE FROM MR. HWANG, THE ONE WHO STARTED IT ALL.

WHY... DID YOU SPARE OUR LIVES?

...

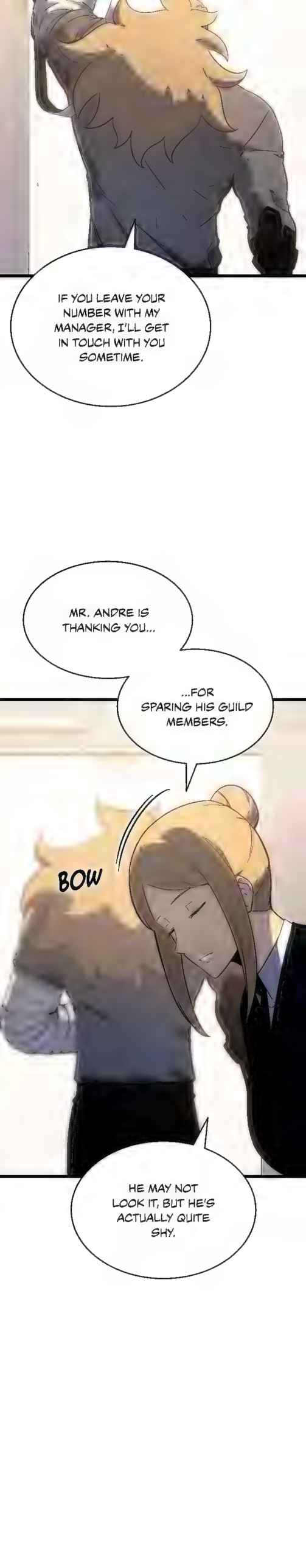
BECAUSE NONE OF YOU COMMITTED A CRIME THAT WAS GRAVE ENOUGH TO WARRANT DEATH.

...I SEE.

I'M PLANNING ON GOING ALL OUT FOR MR. HWANG'S FUNERAL SERVICE.

I KNOW THAT HE COMMITTED A SERIOUS CRIME, BUT I HOPE YOU WILL AT LEAST LET HIM HAVE A PROPER FUNERAL.

OH, ALSO. LET'S GRAB A BITE ONCE MY ARM'S BETTER.


IF YOU LEAVE YOUR NUMBER WITH MY MANAGER, I'LL GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU SOMETIME.
MR. ANDRE IS THANKING YOU...
...FOR SPARING HIS GUILD MEMBERS.
BOW
HE MAY NOT LOOK IT, BUT HE'S ACTUALLY QUITE SHY.

MR. SUNG.
IF IT ISN'T TOO MUCH TROUBLE, COULD YOU TELL ME YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION?
MR. ANDRE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK YOU WITH A GIFT,
SO PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU WANT.
OH, THANK YOU, BUT I'M ALL RIGHT.

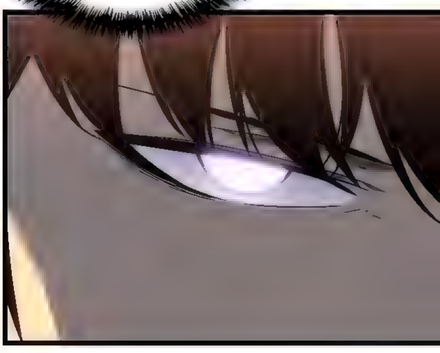
MR. ANDRE... CAN'T STAND BEING INDEBTED TO ANYONE BECAUSE OF HIS HIGHLY COMPETITIVE NATURE.
SO PLEASE TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT. ANYTHING IS OKAY.

HE WANTS TO THANK ME WITH A GIFT...?
A GOOD DAGGER WOULD BE NICE...
A DAGGER... UNDERSTOOD. THANK YOU, MR. SUNG.
NOW THEN, WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET THE HUNTERS ON THE LIST?
LET ME ESCORT YOU.
NO, THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT.

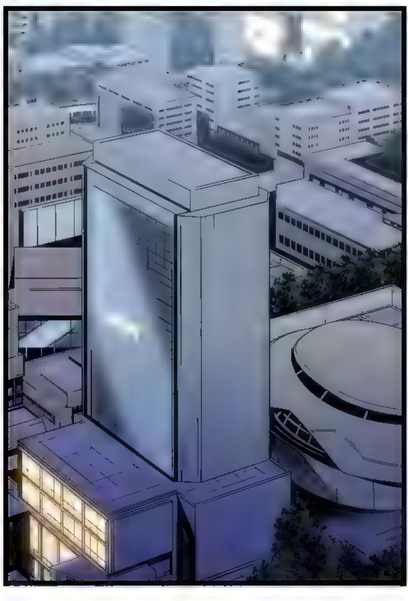
BUT WHY IS ONE OF THEM MISSING? I DON'T SEE THE SIXTH PLACE HUNTER.
HOW DID YOU...

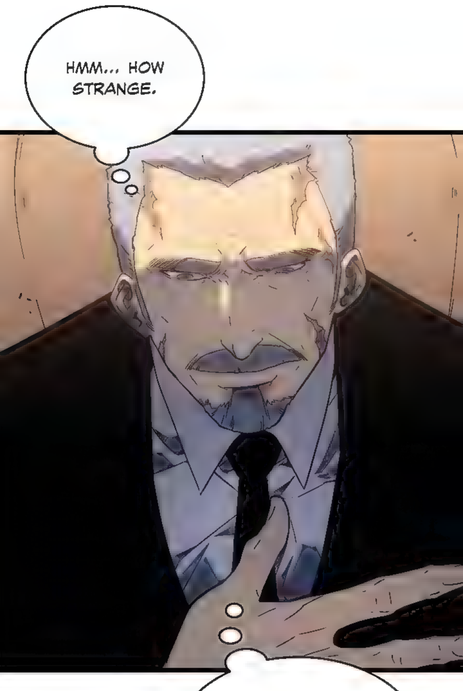
WE LOST CONTACT WITH HIM A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE CONFERENCE.
THE BRAZILLIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN SEARCHING FOR HIM IN SECRET, BUT HIS WHEREABOUTS ARE STILL UNKNOWN.

DID THEY GET HIM ALREADY?



THAT MEANS THERE ARE SEVEN PEOPLE LEFT.




HMM... HOW STRANGE.
I KEEP EXPERIENCING HEART PALPITATIONS.

I'VE HAD PROBLEMS WITH MY HEART FOR A WHILE NOW, BUT...
...IT'S GOTTEN A LOT WORSE LATELY.

HAVE I... REACHED MY LIMIT?

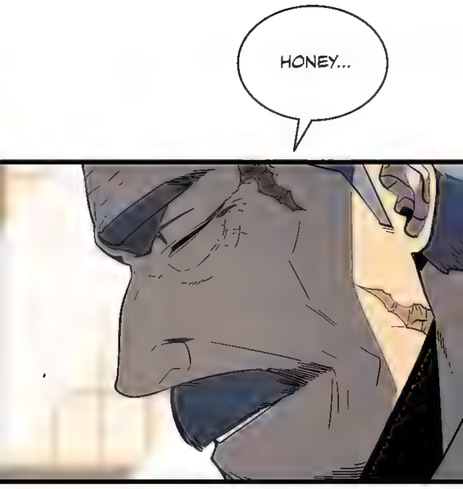
MY DOCTOR TOLD ME I COULD DIE WITHIN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS IF I DIDN'T RETIRE RIGHT AWAY.

BUT A YEAR WENT BY, THEN ANOTHER... AND HERE I AM NOW.

IF THIS IS AS FAR AS I CAN GO, THERE'S NOT MUCH I CAN DO ABOUT IT. AT LEAST I'VE MANAGED TO MAKE IT THIS FAR.

HELLO?
BEEP

NOTHING BAD HAPPENED TODAY, RIGHT?


HONEY...

OF COURSE NOTHING BAD HAPPENED. IN FACT, I WAS JUST ABOUT TO HEAD HO...
LEAN
JOLT

W...WHAT
THE HELL?

HOW CAN
THIS BE...?

!

To Be Continued...

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